

Residency Spotlight on Ophthalmology

reprinted from On Call the Newsletter of Temple University School of Medicine
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Dr. Stephen Wong

Ophthalmology is the surgical specialty concerned with the structure, function, diseases, and abnormalities of the eye. Despite its classification as a surgical specialty, the practice of ophthalmology includes an equally represented focus in medicine.

Dr Stephen Wong, the Director of the Ophthalmology Residency Program at Temple since 1979, points out that the eye is a window to the entire body, and many systemic illnesses,

such as diabetes, hypertension, infections, cancer, and AIDS, can be diagnosed by funduscopy examination.

Dr Wong also notes that ophthalmology is a quickly evolving field, with new innovations, such as the use of the laser, and novel microsurgical techniques, continually adding to the ophthalmologists armamentarium.

The Residency Program

An ophthalmology residency is three years in length following an internship year, preferably in medicine. The goal of the first year is to familiarize oneself with the various diagnostic tests performed in ophthalmology, and to learn to discriminate abnormal findings from normal ones. In the second year, residents focus on mastering differential diagnoses and learning various medical and surgical techniques. Third year residents polish the skills learned in the first two years, and also serve as teachers to medical students and younger residents.

A significant amount of time is spent on rotations at centers other than Temple. Residents spend four months at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, eight weeks at Lankaneau Hospital, and eight months at the Medical Center of Delaware.

First year residents are on call every third night, while second and third year residents take call every sixth night. All residents work approximately 50 hours a week.

After Residency

Approximately one-third to two-thirds of residents go on for further fellowship training in areas such as retinal surgery, glaucoma surgery, and corneal transplantation. The rest go on to private practice, and most remain affiliated with teaching institutions.

Getting a Residency

This is a very competitive specialty. According to Dr Wong, each

year, Temple receives approximately 225 applications mostly from graduating medical students, of which, 50 are interviewed for three available positions. Historically, one of these three positions is often filled by an applicant from Temple. It should be noted that strong emphasis is placed on pre-clinical grades and performance on Part I of the National Boards in the evaluation of Ophthalmology.

Why Ophthalmology?

Dr Wong believes that if you like the idea of practicing in a field that strikes a balance between medicine and surgery, in addition to using state-of-the art tools and equipment while performing some of the most delicate surgery in all of medicine, then ophthalmology may be for you. In addition, Dr Wong most enjoys the challenge of diagnosing systemic illness through the examination of the eye.

The Future

New innovations are quickly and continually changing the field of ophthalmology. Tremendous strides have been made in saving the vision of patients with diabetes and glaucoma. Moreover, new surgical advances, such as radiokeratotomy, aimed at correcting myopia and even hyperopia, are making glasses obsolete. These are just some of the examples of innovations that are revolutionizing the field of ophthalmology.

Dr Wong's Weighing of Factors for Ophthalmology Candidates

3	AOA
2	Clinical Grades
4	Pre-clinical Grades
4	Board Scores
2	Recommendations
3	Dean's Letter
2	Extracurriculars
4	Interview
3	Research